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The Ancestral Trail

Cyber Challenge in the Next Dimension

51

Vileeon, Cyber Judge

Trapped in the court of the Cyber Citadel

Judek Heller

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In the fifty-first sector

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Computer graphics produced by Mehau Kulyk

Little was said as the three adventurers were unceremoniously marched away by the Dark Robots and led across a vast, featureless plain. The pace set by their captors was relentless. Richard's legs ached and he longed for a chance to rest. On his shoulders, he carried the trembling Teeza. The little wigmat was so frightened that he was unable to speak.

The trek was never ending. Richard lost all track of time and had no idea of the direction in which he was travelling. In this forbidding place there was no night or day. The bedraggled landscape was illuminated by an eerie half-light that cast long shadows over the inhuman setting.

Dangerous horizon

Richard was beginning to wonder whether he was doomed to spend the rest of his days in this alien world, when familiar metallic tones rang out in the air. It was the voice of Robo.

"Warning! Sensors indicate we are approaching non-organic structure," the robot announced. "Danger there!"

Before Richard could reply, one of the Dark Robots cut in. "Silence traitor!" it ordered. "We are close to the master's citadel. You will not speak!"

Richard's eyes scanned the horizon. Sure enough, he could see a group of tiny black dots in the far distance. As he walked, the dots began to grow bigger until they gradually merged into the shape of a city. Soon, the desert petered out and the companions found themselves approaching a pristine walkway.

Teeza began to whimper as the three were shoved through imposing city gates. In front of them stood a large building elaborately decorated with carvings of grotesque alien faces.

At last, another of the Dark Robots spoke. "Enter the Cyber Court," it ordered, "and prepare to meet the Judge!"

Richard and his friends were hustled through the entrance of the building. They landed in a heap on a hard, polished floor made from marble. Richard picked himself up and looked around.

The Cyber Judge

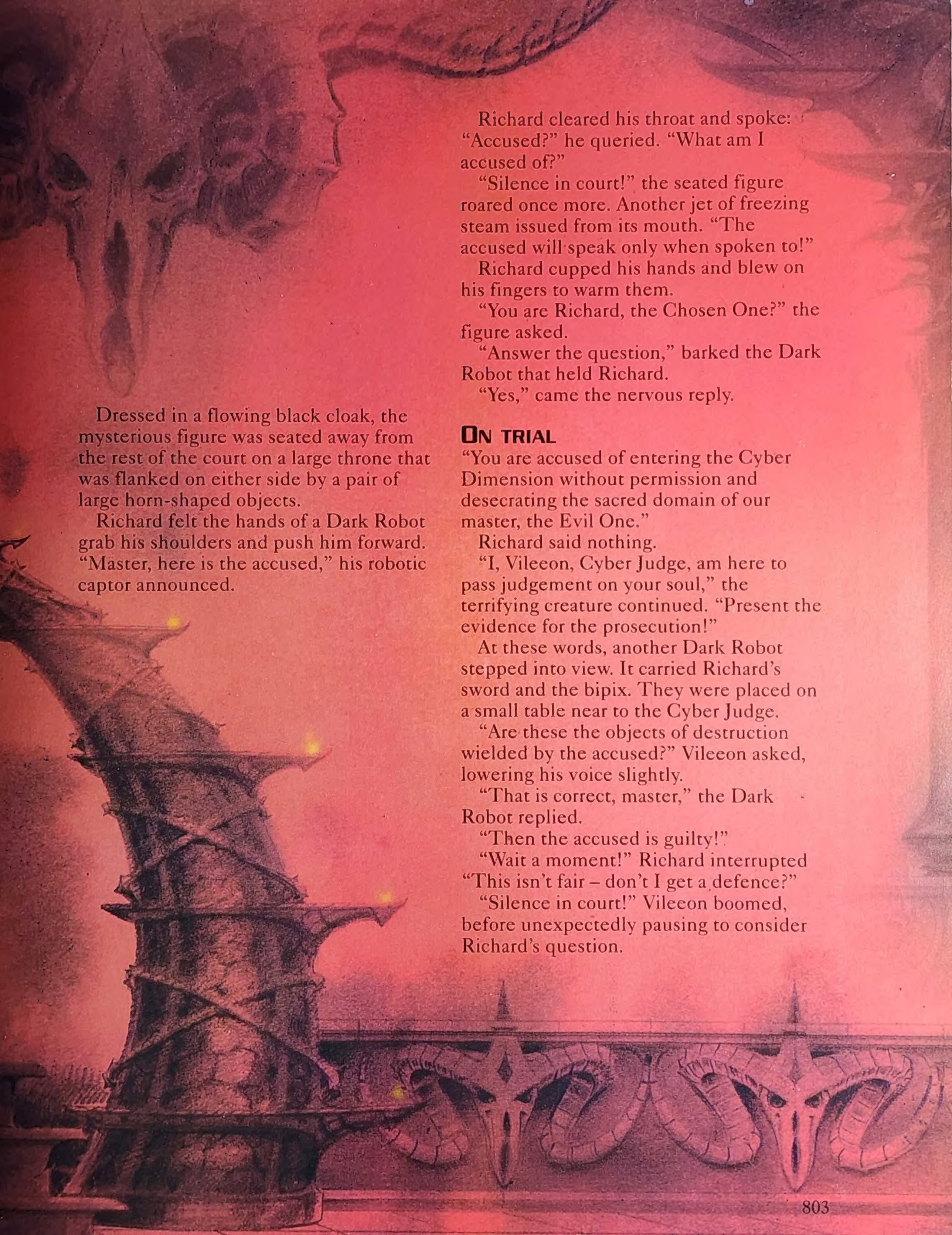
He was standing in the centre of a large hall that was bathed in a crimson sheen of light. To his left and right were rows of metallic chairs. On them sat a horde of terrifying creatures. Richard gasped in disbelief. It had been his misfortune to encounter most of these creatures in the none too distant past.

Dark Robots sat side-by-side with ugly mutators. Vicious replitypes nestled smugly beside slathering gargoyles. Deadly atomizers and savage sophrites stared impassively at the three terrified companions.

"Robo," Richard whispered in terror, "I think we're in trouble."

Suddenly, the loudest voice that Richard had ever heard in his life reverberated throughout the hall. "Silence in court!" it boomed. The deafening words were accompanied by a vast cloud of icy steam that rapidly filled the hall. A fine layer of frost formed on Richard's body armour.

Trembling with a mixture of fear and cold, Richard sought out the source of the sound. As the mist began to clear, the outline of a figure could be seen.



Dressed in a flowing black cloak, the mysterious figure was seated away from the rest of the court on a large throne that was flanked on either side by a pair of large horn-shaped objects.

Richard felt the hands of a Dark Robot grab his shoulders and push him forward. "Master, here is the accused," his robotic captor announced.

Richard cleared his throat and spoke: "Accused?" he queried. "What am I accused of?"

"Silence in court!" the seated figure roared once more. Another jet of freezing steam issued from its mouth. "The accused will speak only when spoken to!"

Richard cupped his hands and blew on his fingers to warm them.

"You are Richard, the Chosen One?" the figure asked.

"Answer the question," barked the Dark Robot that held Richard.

"Yes," came the nervous reply.

On trial

"You are accused of entering the Cyber Dimension without permission and desecrating the sacred domain of our master, the Evil One."

Richard said nothing.

"I, Vileeon, Cyber Judge, am here to pass judgement on your soul," the terrifying creature continued. "Present the evidence for the prosecution!"

At these words, another Dark Robot stepped into view. It carried Richard's sword and the bipix. They were placed on a small table near to the Cyber Judge.

"Are these the objects of destruction wielded by the accused?" Vileeon asked, lowering his voice slightly.

"That is correct, master," the Dark Robot replied.

"Then the accused is guilty!"

"Wait a moment!" Richard interrupted "This isn't fair – don't I get a defence?"

"Silence in court!" Vileeon boomed, before unexpectedly pausing to consider Richard's question.

"Oh very well, bring on the witnesses!" he finally snapped in irritation. As he spoke, one whole side of the Cyber Court erupted into light. Richard shielded his eyes, dazzled by the sudden brightness. Gradually, a rank of screens could be seen. Each one contained an image of a creature that Richard had encountered during his adventures in the Cyber Dimension.

Old acquaintance

Richard looked on in confusion as Vileeon barked out further orders. "Call the first witness!" he urged.

Instantly, one of the screens grew brighter than the others and the voice of Menanger, keeper of the intergalactic zoo, was added to the proceedings. "Greetings, oh master, with all due respect," he chanted. "A sad, sorry tale I will pause to reflect."

"Do you recognize the accused?" asked Vileeon.

"Yes, great one, I do, I am sorry to say," the image on the screen replied in a sing-song voice. "For when our paths crossed was a terrible day!"

"In your own words," instructed the Cyber Judge, "tell the court of the injustices that the Chosen One inflicted upon your helpless person."

Menanger cleared his throat. "He came to my zoo with his robotic friend. And I gave him everything, all I could send."

"Get on with it!" snapped the Judge.

"Forgive me, my master, I know not what I do. For this wretched creature destroyed my lovely zoo."

Rogue's gallery

"Call the next witness!" ordered a Dark Robot. Richard watched as a screen containing an image of Toxis, the poison predator, was highlighted. He shrugged his shoulders in disbelief as the creature proceeded to give an equally damning report of the occasion when he and Richard had crossed paths.

"This isn't fair!" Richard shouted in exasperation. "These are all witnesses for the prosecution. I still have no defence!"

"Silence in court!" Vileeon bellowed once more.

As the words echoed around the hall, another blast of freezing air swept over Richard and his two bewildered friends.

The Cyber Judge shuffled on his mighty throne and began to laugh maniacally. "I, Vileeon, am both prosecution and defence," he chortled.

Robo's voice abruptly broke into his mocking laughter. "Negative," said the robot. "Procedure is illegal. Chosen One must have a defence. I will defend him."

The wrath of Vileeon

The Judge turned towards the little robot and gave a deep hoot of irritation. "You will do well to stay silent. Traitors may not speak in my court."

Vileeon raised his arms menacingly towards the little robot. Instantly, a beam of intense light streamed out from one of his hands.

It skimmed the robot, who made a sudden dash towards the exit of the courtroom. Two Dark Robots followed, both clutching laser guns.

"Leave him," said Vileeon ominously. "I shall deal with the traitor!"

The Cyber Judge again raised his arms. Immediately, a shaft of blinding light descended from the roof of the courtroom and enveloped the fleeing robot. Like a statue frozen in time, Robo was caught in its overwhelming glare.

"The traitor is trapped within my light ray," Vileeon explained. "He will remain there for all eternity as a warning to those who dare defy the master."

Richard felt tiny hands grip his ankles. He looked down to see Teeza's quivering form. "Frightened..." Teeza whimpered.

"Now," Vileeon announced, "on with the trial – I am ready to pass sentence." All eyes were on the Cyber Judge.

"I still haven't had the chance to defend myself," Richard argued, struggling to keep his voice steady.

"Silence!" Vileeon snarled. "Your continual interruptions will not help your hopeless cause!"

There was a hushed silence in the court. Another Dark Robot stepped into view. It was clutching an evil-looking mask. Vileeon solemnly raised the object to his face until it covered his vile features. Then the Cyber Judge spoke again:

"The court will stand and hear my judgement," he said solemnly.

THE VERDICT

"I declare the defendant guilty of illegal entry into the Cyber Dimension. I declare him guilty of desecrating the sacred world of the mighty Evil One. I declare him guilty of destroying the sanctity of the Ancestral World. "

Vileeon paused and took a lingering look at Richard, who defiantly returned the Cyber Judge's stare. "I declare him guilty of being the Chosen One, sworn enemy of the master. There is only one punishment which fits these heinous crimes."

Sitting on the monstrous throne, with the hideous mask shrouding his frightening face, the Cyber Judge was the embodiment of all the evil that Richard had encountered since his arrival in the Cyber Dimension. As Vileeon prepared to pass sentence, Richard could not resist wondering whether all his adventures had been nothing more than a dreadful nightmare.

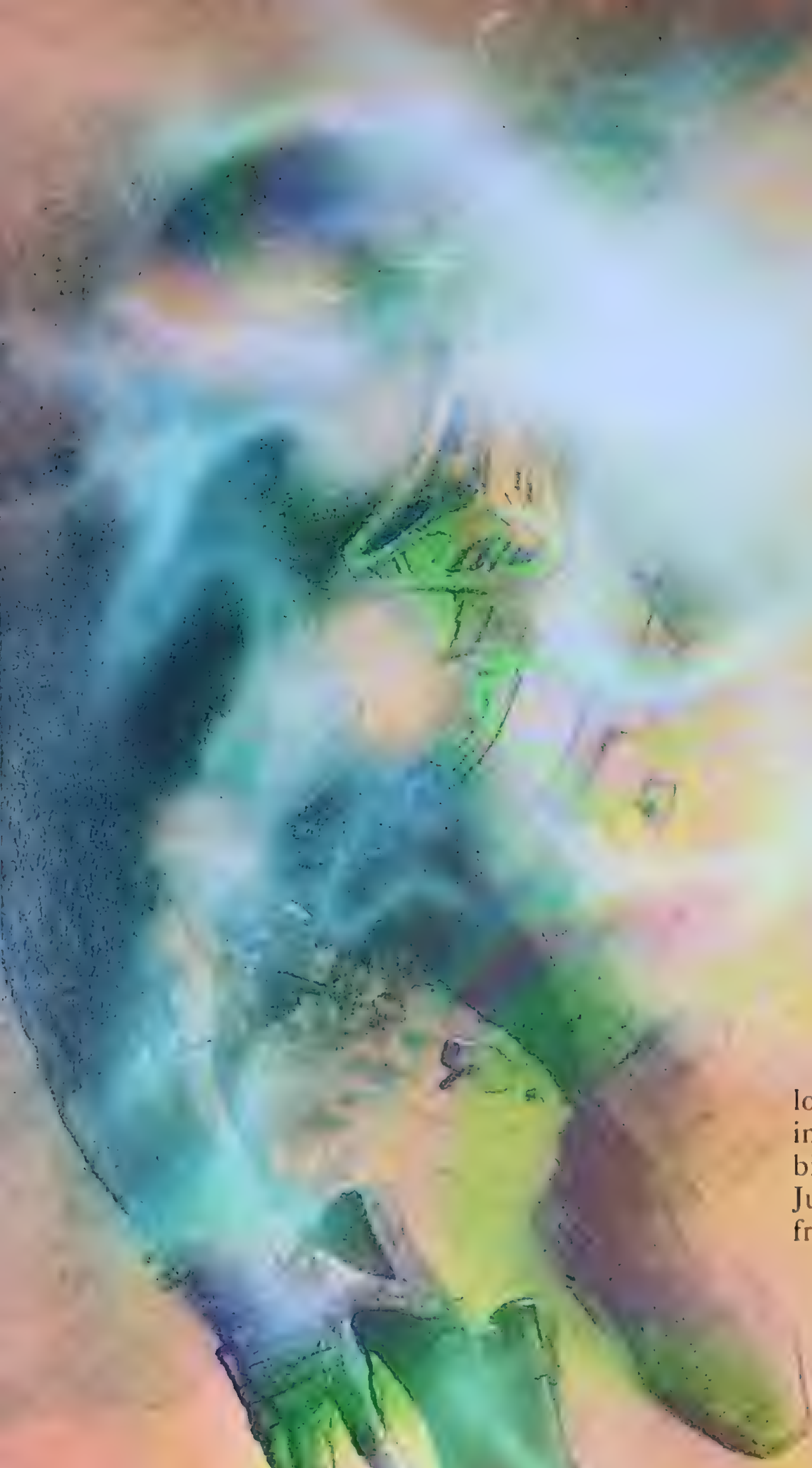
The Cyber Judge, however, quickly brought him back to reality. "I declare that there is but one fate worthy of these crimes," Vileeon announced. "Death!"

There was a tremendous cheer from the gathering of creatures in the courtroom. The sound of stamping feet and clapping hands reached a deafening crescendo.

Richard desperately looked round the courtroom for a means of escape, but there was none. The cold hands of the Dark Robot still held him firm.

"You have led a charmed life since you stole into this land like a thief in the night, Chosen One, but now it is the end," Vileeon gloated.

As Richard closed his eyes and prepared for the worst, he felt something tugging at his arm. It was Teeza – the little wigmat was trying to attract his attention.



"What is it, Teeza?" Richard asked, looking down at his companion. His eyes immediately lit up. Teeza was carrying the bipix! He had slipped away while the Judge was speaking and stolen the weapon from the table near to his foe.

In an instant, it was in Richard's eager hands. Moments later, a concentrated beam of light gushed from the bipix and struck the robot standing nearest to him. The force of the blast threw the metallic monster straight into the air.

Chance of escape

With a shout, Richard swept the deadly beam of light over the crowd of onlookers. Screams of terror mingled with roars of rage as the awesome weapon did its job. "I don't give up that easily!" Richard yelled in triumph, grabbing his sword and heading for the exit to the courtroom.

"Get him!" Vileeon screamed. Yet again, the hall filled with his icy breath, "If he escapes you will all pay with your lives!"

As the horde of fearsome creatures prepared to give chase, Richard turned and swept another beam of deadly light over their vile bodies.

At once they were gone. All that remained of their terrifying forms were clouds of glowing dust, which slowly dispersed and faded away.

"Teeza, you're a genius!" Richard yelled as they fled.

Again, the voice of Vileeon rang out. "I command you to stop!" he shouted. The furious Cyber Judge had risen from his throne and was pushing aside his minions. Quivering with rage, he strode purposefully after Richard and the wigmat.

"Let's see how you like a taste of the bipix," Richard said, aiming the weapon at the evil figure.

The blast caught Vileeon full on and he was instantly immersed in light. Richard punched the air in excitement before stopping to survey his handiwork.

Deadly beam

His joy was short-lived. Instead of disintegrating into tiny points of light, Vileeon was fighting off the effects of the bipix. Richard watched in awe as the evil form of the Cyber Judge stepped out from the veil of light surrounding him.

"Fool!" Vileeon shrieked. "Did you really believe that a toy such as that could harm me?"

With a sweep of his spindly hand, Vileeon produced an intense beam of light of his own. The light struck the bipix, wrenching it away from Richard's grasp and quickly reduced it to rivulets of steaming molten metal.

"Now it is time to carry out your sentence," Vileeon said coldly.

Another burst of light came from the Cyber Judge. It struck Richard and sent him spinning helplessly through the air. He crashed to the floor with a sickening thud, just in time to catch sight of Vileeon preparing to launch another attack.

Wave upon wave of pain swept over Richard. His head lolled to one side and he lost consciousness. As he lay prone on the floor, Teeza knelt beside him and began to cry.

Only the wigmat's sad whimpering broke the silence in the courtroom. With hands on hips, Vileeon quietly studied Richard's lifeless form.

Richard's armour was covered with the scars of battle. Vileeon's merciless attack had melted away some of the sturdy material, exposing parts of Richard's bare flesh. Teeza's tears dribbled slowly on to the floor, forming a pool next to his friend.

"The Chosen One is dead," trumpeted the Cyber Judge. "His hopeless quest is over. The Evil One reigns supreme."

Spark of Life

Teeza's mournful cries intensified as he stared sadly at his friend. Then the wigmat spotted something: Richard's chest was slowly rising and falling – he was still breathing! Unfortunately, Teeza was not the only one to notice this fragile spark of life, "Is there nothing I can do to finish this miserable creature?" Vileeon growled.

The Cyber Judge stepped forward. "One more blast of my death ray and it will all be over!" he snarled. With evil in his eyes, he prepared to apply the final blow that would finish Richard off forever.

Without warning the evil Judge stopped moving. For several moments he stared intently at Richard's still form. Then, in a shaking voice, he spoke: "Not the amulet!" he cried. "Take it away!"

Vileeon's ranting and raving stirred something inside the unconscious boy and he began to wake up.

"Where am I?" Richard mumbled.

His words went unnoticed, drowned out by Vileeon's agonized cries. "Get the cursed object away from my sight!" the once mighty Judge shrieked.

As Vileeon cowered away from the amulet, something strange began to happen. The glittering object seemed to take on a life of its own.

Dazzling pure white light streamed from the centre of the amulet, bathing the evil Cyber Judge in its glow.

"I'd forgotten that the boy still carries that thing!" Vileeon cried in a voice filled with horror. "Get it away from me!"

Feeling groggy and weak, Richard slowly pulled himself to his feet and faced his tormentor. "What are you frightened of?" he asked, staring intently at his foe.

Teeza tugged at Richard's leg. "Bad man is scared of pretty necklace," explained the wigmat, gesturing towards the amulet which was still hanging around Richard's neck. It was glowing fiercely.

Force against evil

There was a light of understanding in Richard's eyes. With the beginnings of a smile appearing on his face, Richard plucked the object from where it hung and held it aloft. "So this is what's frightening you," he said.

"Take it away!" Vileeon pleaded. "Or else you will pay dearly!"

Richard took a few steps forward and was startled to discover that Vileeon seemed to be changing appearance.

"Cyber Judge is transmuting," confirmed a familiar voice. Richard spun around. It was Robo! The little robot was free. Vileeon's power was obviously no longer strong enough to keep the robot imprisoned.

Richard watched in grim fascination as his enemy's features began to churn and remould themselves. Suddenly, there was a dull flash of light and the Cyber Judge disappeared completely.

"What's happening now?" Richard asked the watching Robo.

"Vileeon is changing into alternative organism," was the robot's ominous reply.

Richard held his breath. Clutching his sword, he prepared to do battle with whatever vile creature the Cyber Dimension decided to throw at him next. For what seemed an age, nothing happened. Then a familiar shadow slowly began to creep over the floor.

SHOOMI'S SANCTUARY

Enter into the Cyber Dimension and engage optical recognition to find...

▶ Shoomi and Shoobi

Shoomi and Shoobi are still keeping up with our hero's adventures in the Cyber Dimension. Can you spot Richard's twin shadows somewhere in this issue in under three minutes?

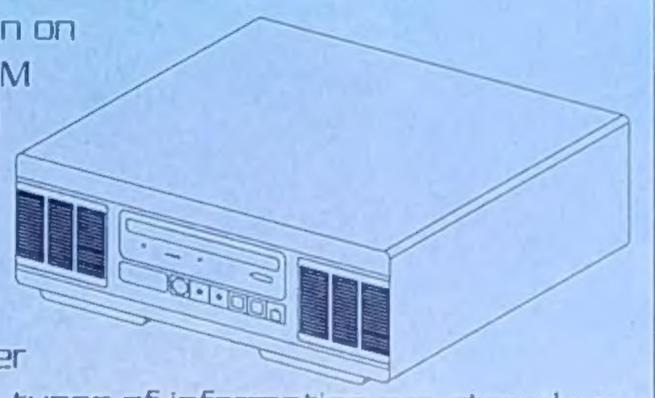
In issue 50 Shoomi and Shoobi were below the binary panel.

▶ Computer Challenge

Hidden somewhere in this issue is a vitally important computer component from the sinister Cyber Dimension. Use your visual skills to help Richard, Robo and Teeza locate it in less than three minutes.

When you have discovered the component's hiding place, can you guess what it is and what its function might be?

In the last issue a CD ROM player was hidden on page 793. CD ROM players are used to play compact disks that contain sound, music, pictures, video or computer programs. These types of information are stored on the CD as a series of 'pits' that are etched into a thin layer of aluminium. A very thin laser beam inside the CD ROM player reads the contents of the compact disk, which is able to store up to 650 megabytes of computer code, or 72 minutes of audio material.



▶ Cyber Power cards

In this issue you will find the corrected version of the *Cyber Power* card depicting Toxis, poison predator. This was printed with an incorrect card number in issue 35. Discard the original card and substitute the new version. We apologize for any inconvenience that this error may have caused you.

There is also a joker card with this issue – the Evil One himself. The last *Cyber Power* card is in part 52. Your collection of *Cyber Power* cards will then be complete and you will be able to play all the *Cyber Power* games included in The Ancestral Trail.

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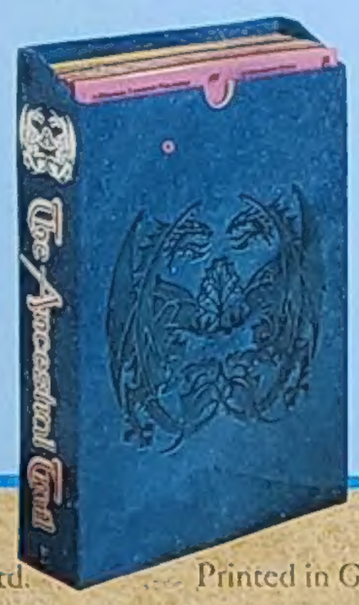

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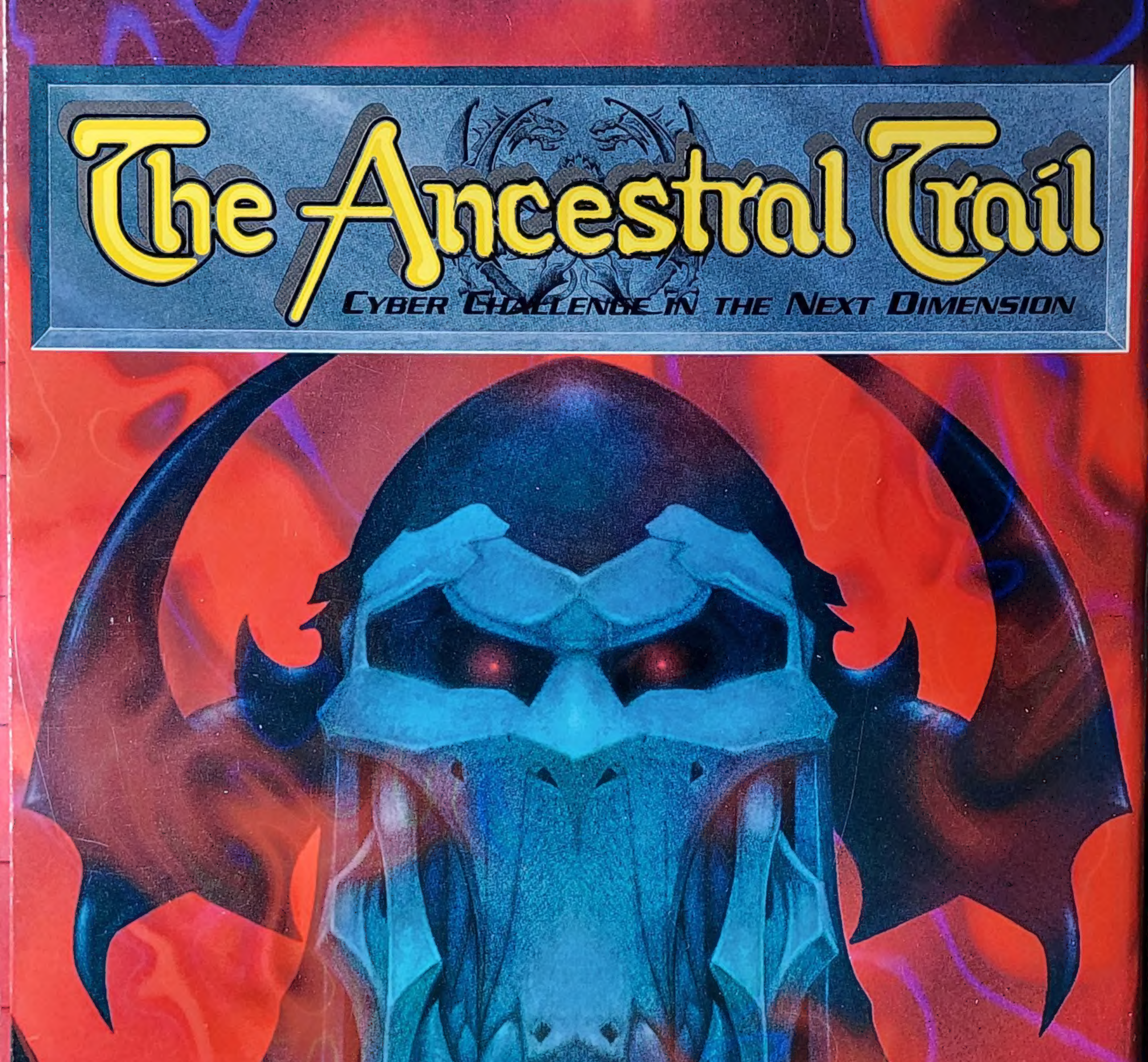
The Ancestral Trail

Cyber Challenge in the Next Dimension



In Issue 52

The Evil One

plus

- 2 Techscan cards
- Your last Cyber Power card
- The final Cyber Chess pieces

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